



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on November 15, 2013

## Reid, Pelosi — If ObamaCare’s So “Wonderful” Why Aren’t YOU Joining?

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) is fuming over Senator David Vitter’s efforts to expose members of the Senate and House who exempt themselves and their staff members from the negative impacts of ObamaCare they are forcing on the rest of us.



By Thursday, November 14, Sen. Vitter (R-La.) had Sen. Reid almost ready to blow a gasket. On Tuesday, November 12, Vitter had held up a unanimous consent vote needed to move a pharmaceutical bill forward.

On Thursday, Vitter asked for unanimous consent agreements to have a vote on his legislation called the “Show Your Exemption Act,” which would require each congressional office to publicly disclose whom they are exempting from entering the ObamaCare exchange. He offered to have a vote on the legislation as an amendment to the Compounding Pharmacies bill, the National Defense Authorization Act, or as stand-alone legislation.

“The fact that Harry Reid is going to such lengths to block even this disclosure vote says it all: As Americans face mass cancellations and huge premium increases, his top priority is to protect the Washington exemption from Obamacare,” Vitter said in a [press release](#). “I’ll continue to demand votes on this issue as opportunities arise — and they will — including as next year’s election approaches.”

According to Vitter’s press release, he “has been working on legislation dubbed the ‘Vitter Amendment,’ which would eliminate the ObamaCare exemption for Washington altogether by clarifying that all Members of Congress, congressional staff, the President, Vice President and political appointees must purchase their health plans on the exchange.” “It would,” says Vitter, “also require that they receive the same amount of financial support from tax credits or subsidies as any American outside of Washington. Reid has blocked every attempt for a vote on this.”

On Thursday, Reid blasted Vitter for “wasting time,” [charging](#):

Unless the entire United States Senate bends to [Vitter’s] wish, he will force this body to jump through hoops and work through the next several days wasting time to finish this crucial drug bill.

### **If It’s Good for Ordinary Americans, Why Not for Congress?**

Senator Vitter is making a crusade out of exposing and stopping what is known as the congressional “exemption” to the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Public outrage has been enflamed since last August, when it was revealed that President Obama, in order to stop a revolt on Capitol Hill against ObamaCare by his own party, had used the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to carve out a special privilege for members of Congress and their staff members.



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During the congressional battle over passage of the ACA, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) succeeded in placing a provision in the law kicking members of Congress and their staffs off the very generous Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and requiring them to obtain their health insurance from plans created by the law or offered through the ObamaCare exchanges — the same as ordinary Americans.

The Democratic leadership knew that if they voted to give themselves an exemption to ObamaCare while forcing their constituents to join the new monstrosity, the Republicans would cream them with that hypocrisy in the next election. So Reid, Pelosi, and company agreed to the poison pill. However, as the launch date for the great ObamaCare experiment drew nearer, Democrats who had blindly followed Rep. Nancy Pelosi's incredible directive to pass the ACA "so you can find out what's in it," actually started reading the bill — and didn't like what they were finding out. Most specifically, they were upset that they and their staff members were going to lose their FEHBP 75-percent premium subsidy provided by the taxpayers. This amounted to a substantial pay cut, since it meant losing \$5,000 in subsidy for an individual plan and \$11,000 for a family plan.

Members of Congress — Republican and Democrat — were faced with losing staff who were ready to jump ship over the rate shock. So, the congressional leaders in both parties connived with the Obama administration to shield themselves and their staff members from the ObamaCare plans they are foisting on the rest of the country. Congressional e-mails show that GOP House Speaker John Boehner and Sen. Harry Reid plotted together to work out a deal with President Obama to spare themselves and their aides from the economic ravages of the ACA. Alex Newman [reported](#) for *The New American* in October:

The e-mails from Boehner's office show that the speaker ... spent months working with Democrat leadership to exempt lawmakers from the healthcare schemes. Indeed, this summer, the e-mails show, Boehner and Reid were plotting to organize a secret meeting with Obama to deal with the issue. Because it would almost certainly spark another wave of public outrage, Boehner's chief of staff even agreed to use a deceptive cover story to conceal the true purpose of the meeting: plotting to save Congress from ObamaCare.

"We can't let it get out there that this is for [Boehner] and [Reid] to ask the President to carve us out of the requirement of Obamacare," Boehner's chief of staff Mike Sommers told Reid's top aide, David Krone, in a July 17 e-mail obtained by Politico and other media outlets. "This is a little bit more difficult because it isn't a routine meeting, as [Nancy] Pelosi and [Mitch] McConnell won't be there. I am even ok if it is the President hauling us down to talk about the next steps on immigration." When Reid's staff expressed support for having the White House deceive the American people by pretending the meeting was about "immigration," Sommers responded: "I really don't care what is [sic] about[,] it just can't be about what we know it is about!" The White House was apparently happy to participate in the fraud against Americans, too, an e-mail from Krone shows.

While all of this subterfuge was going on, Nancy Pelosi was falsely assuring America that she and the rest of the members of Congress would also be joining us in ObamaCare. "Members of Congress and their staffs must enroll in health marketplaces as the Affordable Care Act requires," she [stated](#) on August 1. "As we continue our work to ensure the smooth implementation of this law and look forward to the start of enrollment on October 1st, we will continue our efforts this August to educate consumers on the law's provisions and tout the critical benefits already in place for millions of Americans."



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What Rep. Pelosi failed to mention is that the “millions of Americans” she referred to would not be receiving the same privileged subsidies that she and fellow members of the Beltway aristocracy had bestowed on themselves.

## **No More “Carve Outs,” Privileges, Exemptions**

President Obama, Sen. Reid, and Rep. Pelosi have been unstinting in their praise for the unsustainable, non-affordable Affordable Care Act. Sen. Reid says it is “wonderful”; Rep. Pelosi says that she is “proud” of it and that Secretary Sebelius has done a “fabulous” job in launching it. But they are not willing to join it themselves; they’ll keep their “Cadillac” — no make that “Rolls Royce” — plans, thank you.

The ObamaCare “carve out” is especially infuriating since it not only permits the Washington ruling class to once again subject the American people to laws from which Washington exempts itself, but it has been done in an especially devious and illegal manner. There is no provision in the law authorizing the OPM — an executive branch agency — to issue any rule or regulation allowing for the subsidy for members of Congress or their aides. Neither President Obama nor the OPM may legally grant the subsidy to members of Congress and their staff personnel.

However, this is not the only example of President Obama lawlessly changing provisions of the ACA by executive fiat. Grace-Marie Turner at the Galen Institute [lists 10 major changes](#) President Obama has made to the law by administrative action, as well as another 15 changes enacted by Congress.

As millions more Americans receive health insurance cancellation notices and the full impact of ObamaCare sticker shock sinks in, Democrats are worried that they will feel severe retribution in the 2014 elections. They *should be* worried, as should be Speaker Boehner and those Republicans who have gamed this issue, instead of honestly, forthrightly exposing and opposing it at every opportunity. The public backlash against this egregious double standard has refused to die and is certain to continue growing, as the ObamaCare pain spreads and intensifies.

Forcing President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary Sebelius, Sen. Reid, Rep. Pelosi, and the rest of the Washington establishment that created the ObamaCare monstrosity to join the collective misery may not be the final solution, but it would be a step in the right direction.

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